

A BOOK OF VERSE
BY LADY MAGNUS

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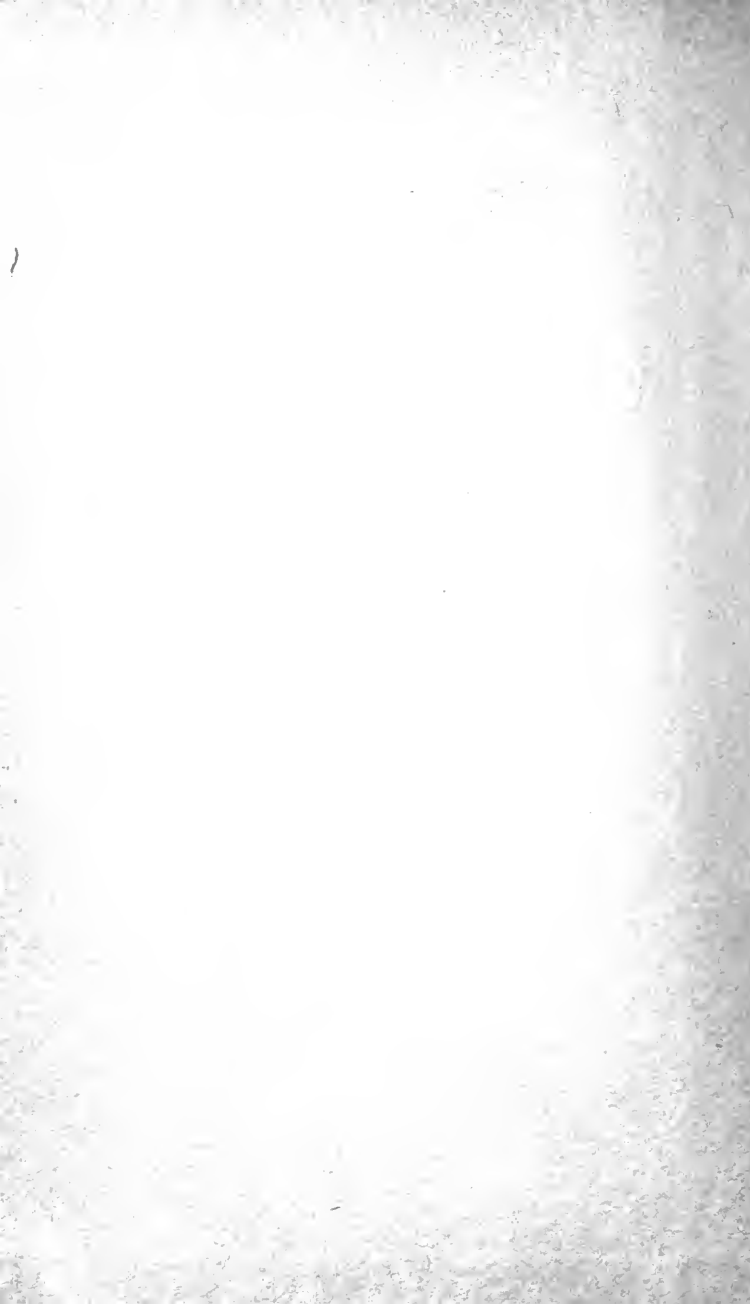


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A BOOK OF VERSE



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BY

KATIE MAGNUS

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TO THE DEAR MEMORY
OF MY DEAREST BROTHER,
BARROW EMANUEL,

FEB. 4, 1842—FEB. 14, 1904

I cannot think of you, dear,
Afar, in Heaven, with "wings";
I think your rest must be quite near,
Among the old loved things.

I cannot see you when I weep,
Nor hardly when I pray;
You do not come in dreams or sleep,
But close in common day.

In every day's most quiet need
I feel you stand beside—
The human, that, dear, was your creed:
To me you have not died.



All these verses, save three, have appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*, and are reprinted in this form with the kind consent of the Editor. The exceptions appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, and the like permission has been granted me.

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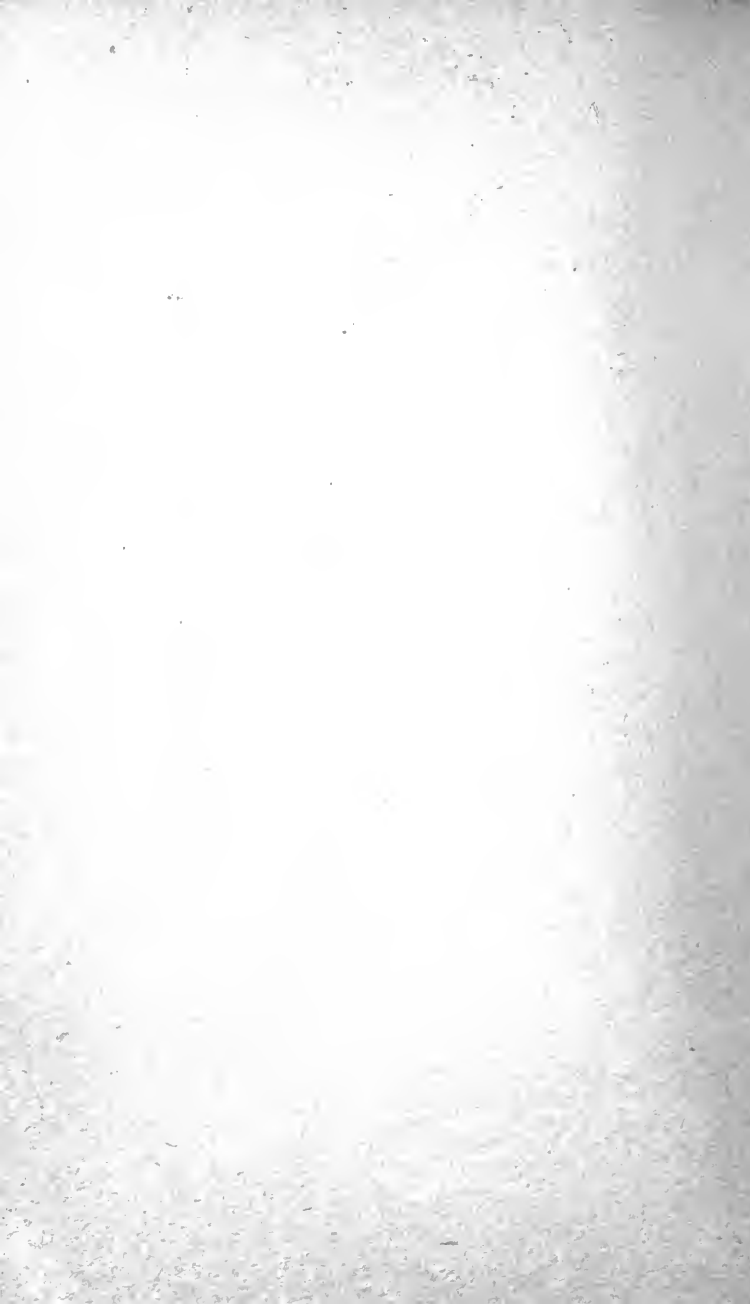
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A BOOK OF VERSE

FROM THE SEA

A WAVE SONG

THE waves wash ever the hard sea-line,
On the grey dull days, in the still sunshine;
And sparkle and murmur and dimple and
 dance,
With a sob under each little sound,
 perchance.

Restless they beat there by day and by
 night,
How should they rest, with the shore just
 in sight?

Scenting the perfume of never-held flowers,
Hearing loud bells crash from never-seen
towers.

A mirror to hills with forest-crown'd crest,
To white dipping wings—but never a
nest ;

So far and no farther—oh ! cruel decree,
To break on the beach, and then back to
the sea.

To thrill at the touch, and then ripple
again,
With no trace of the touch, or the passion,
or pain.

* * * * *

And all that the wavelets are to the
shore,

I am to thee, love—all that, and more !

WINTER WAVES

WIND-SWEPT cliff and dull, wet sand,
Innocent of crowd or band—
What the charm of wintry sea ?
Charm in mist is mystery !

Not a sparkle. Grey and grave
Sobs and foams each curling wave ;
But—the whiteness runs to meet
Just your own one pair of feet !

Each white wavelet, slow to break
Seems to linger for your sake—
Summer's universal kiss
Has no spell to equal this !

ON THE BEACH

ONE wonders sometimes if the waves,
That cover up so many graves,

As they frivol on the beach,
Whisper of wrecks, low, each to each.

As soft they lap the small, bare feet,
As safe they bear the frail toy fleet,
When deep answereth to deep,
What record is it that they keep?

The sweet, glad service of the sun,
The sterner work their might hath done,
Battles, storms, the foam, the fret—
Do they just ripple and forget?

DREAMS

SWIFT wings outspread on a gleaming sea
The taste of the salt and the foam,
Or folded close on a green-leaved tree—
Which way do the wing'd dream home?

Warm nest soft-lined and the small sweet
 brood,
The limitless limits of love,
Or space and stir for each changeful
 mood,
Glad earth, or pale stars above ?

PEBBLES

Do the pebbles, when summer is fled,
 Left lone to the tide, on the beach—
Do they miss the quick patter and tread,
 And long for the touch out of reach ?

Do they envy the stones in the street ?
 Those poor little pebbles forlorn—
For the love of the echoing feet
 Would they bear what street stones have
 borne ?

Would they welcome the grind of the
wheel?

The levelling crash would they brave?
Would they give up their freedom to feel
The thrill that their service once gave?

There are stones, it may be, that change
hearts

With mortals whose hearts are of stone,
That would rather the splash from the
carts

Than spray from the waves, all alone!

DIVIDED

BETWEEN us there is stormy sea
And leagues on leagues of land,
But ways and waves with him and me
Would not keep hand from hand.

Between us grow the long, long years,
Yet time doth not divide !
A rainbow may be made from tears,
And span such spaces wide.

Between us there is just a word—
With lack of it we live ;
We neither own that we have erred,
We neither say, " Forgive ! "

THE WORD

" Read . . . in the Manuscripts of God "

THE Word of God in printed phrase
Is read by men in divers ways :
We spell, we doubt, and some forget
That printed type is backward set.

But when the print is hard to read,
By dint of more or less of creed,

The manuscript of God remains—
Writ large in waves and fields and lanes.

And there we find the meaning clear ;
We lift our eyes—the hills are near ;
In rainbow tints, between the lines,
We read it where the Promise shines !

FROM THE COUNTRY

WRITTEN IN SNOW

It looked so firm and pure and white,

The very place in which to write

Her name.

And stars and streams, and peaks snow-clad,

Were witnesses, and saw me add

Je t'aime.

As firm, as white, but wild west wind

Had swept the height ; one could not find

Her name.

Fresh snow below, fresh snow above,
It has but covered close, oh love !

Je t'aime.

Long years ago ! And rain and sun
By turn now beat and shine upon

Her name.

And on the stone, as in the snow,
Uncarven words are there below :

Je t'aime—oh, love ! je t'aime.

“IN THE EVENING TIME”

CLOUDLAND at sunset, rose-red and gold,
Visions of Eden the skies unfold ;
Shining rivers that compass the land,
Jasper and onyx their gleaming strand.

Then, in a moment, 'tis common day—
Gold-halo'd firs stand up gaunt and grey,

Fields elysian are stubble again,
Burning bush is just gorse in the lane !

Pavement of pearl spreads mist-like and
 chill,
Dull little cloud, it rests on the hill ;
Gone, our glimpses of Eden. But lo !—
Wonder of wonders—the after-glow !

THE SOUND OF THE RAIN

THE gifts of the summer are sweet,
 The tale of its good gifts is long,
From those that we crush with our feet
 To those that soar o'er us in song.

The scents of its languorous days,
 Its marvel of moon-flooded nights,
Its learning of lingering ways
 With sun and with stars for our lights !

Each and all a matter for praise,
And thus, it may be, our best gain—
With joy in the long, lovely days,
To welcome the sound of the rain !

JASMINE

ONLY a perfume borne on the breeze ;
Only a blossom dropt from the trees ;
Only a blossom never full blown ;
Only a heartache never outgrown.

Sweet-scented jasmine crowning soft hair ;
Soft-whisper'd love-words claiming a share ;
Silvery moonbeams flooding the lawn ;
Light in the darkness, darkness at dawn.

Only a vision borne on the breeze ;
Only a shining from under the trees ;
Only a whisper, " Ever, for ever " ;
Only an echo, " Never—ah ! never."

A SAFE POSSESSION

ALACK ! that flowers should wither,
And golden hair turn gray,
And frosts fall in December,
Where all was green in May.

Sigh not ! The locks once golden
The fields that once were green,
Abide a safe possession,—
For love knows no “has been.”

ON THE BRIDGE

THE river is long, and adown it
The barges they come and go ;
The bridge is wide, and across it
The toilers pass to and fro.

The sun, it shines full on the river,
The lights on the bridge are sweet ;
But who thinks of thanks to the Giver
For aught but for bread and for meat !

And little they heed it, the rowers,
Less yet do they heed who run ;
That care for the seed and the sowers
Is not sole care of the sun !

But the motes, as they dance, proclaim it,
There's use, but there's beauty beside ;
The bridge and the barges may doubt it—
It sounds in the swish of the tide.

A SUM

THEY stand the same, the sentinel trees,
Though shadows now they guard,
They sway as lightly to the breeze,
Our wounds leave them unscarred.

My heart and I, we add the years
And then subtract the pain !
There seems no place for hopeless tears
Where green leaves come again !

OUTSIDE

PIERCING sweet the song of the birds,
Yet always, and ever—song without words !
Sleepily sweet the bees soft hum ;
We is it deaf, or they that are dumb ?

Here and there in fair human speech
We come on a tone beyond our reach,
And know with sudden, sharp sense of pain
That no translating could make it plain.

Hard for men in a world of men,
To fail on a note that's beyond our ken—
Ye small brothers and sisters with wings
Ye make us fail when a fledgling sings !

OUT OF THE MIST

THE mist had lain on the hills all day,
Close wrapt like the veil of a bride,
Revealing part, in its own white way,
Of the beauty 'twas bidden to hide.

And dense as cloud hung the mist on
town,
Dark, dull, like the pall on a bier,
Rumble of cart and rustle of gown
Awaking an echo of fear.

The Promise held, and "at evening
time"
On hills and in town "it was light";
Wet leaves were aglow in frosty rime,
And the fires on men's hearths burnt
bright.

WINTER RAYS

GLAD handfuls of sunshine
Gather'd in snow,
Lawns sunfleck'd in springtime
Glisten not so.

Hoarfrost on green hedges,
Mist on the hills,
A sob in the sedges,
Silent the rills.

Green leaves grew so thick there,
Midday was night !
Now the brown boughs and bare
Let in the light !

ROSES

STRANGE seems it that roses, red roses and
white,

Smell fragrant, bloom gladly, grow tall,
Are ready to bring their sweet buds to the
light,

Though nails pin them fast to a wall.

Strange seems it that roses, white roses
and red,

Those planted in pleasaunce like trees,
Blue skies and green sward for their
canopied bed

No better are loved by the bees !

Sweet seems it that roses, red roses and white

Disdain not on rough stones to cling,
Find help in sharp nails to climb up to
the light,

Make prison teach promise of Spring.

WHEN THE WINDS BLOW

WHAT is it they're trying to tell us,
As they bluster among the pines?
Are the winds of the breezes jealous,
And sighing and moaning the signs?

Do they hate those swaying, tall tree-
tops?
Find no joy in their power to rend?
Are those tears that we take for rain-
drops
On branches that shiver and bend?

Are those gusts a passion of doubting?
Do the winds forget they have heard
That zephyr, and storm-blasts' wild shout-
ing,
Alike are fulfilling His Word?

WOODLAND CONSTANCY

NEWS of new robes for the woodland
world

Is whisper'd by rabbits to elves,
Swift comes soft rustle of leaves uncurl'd
In green, glad delight of themselves.

Maple and larch, big oak, climbing vine,
All stretch out bare limbs to be clad ;
Only the beech—the beech makes no sign
That April is here, and he's glad.

Wrapped in dull raiment, wither'd and
brown,

Close clinging to last summer's leaves,
New, gay, green robes he greets with a
frown—

The beech-tree, he garners his sheaves !

FROM A SURREY ORCHARD

THESE birds that he called his brothers,
The dear saint of far Assisi,
Could they be of kin to these others
Who rob us from every tree?

Little brothers and sisters he called them—
These are kin that are less than kind;
From all our wealth of pink blossom
Not an apple now can we find!

His love—was it love of forgiving?
Or love for the sake of the song?
Can we share in his love of all living,
And protest such thieves do no wrong?

HARVESTERS

THE Harvest Home is very late
Of seed that's sown with tears,
And harvesters get tired who wait
Throughout the barren years.

The poppies flash their scentless red
Amid the waving wheat ;
We garner them instead of bread,
And tears—they are our meat.

And then, when harvest-time is past,
And trees are bare of leaves,
Wide-eyed we come, at last—at last,
Rejoicing—bearing sheaves.

WHICH?

To grow like a palm in the sand,
A greenness, a shade in the land,
Straight, stately, and bearing ripe fruits,
But alone—with sand for its roots.

Or just a reed by the river,
Close to the stir and the quiver—
The swift, warm response of the weeds,
The babble about little seeds.

The palm, could it choose, would it stand,
Straight, stately, a sign in the land,
Or sway in the sun like the weeds,
Be just a glad reed with the reeds?

PEACE

NOT on the plains—not there is peace,
 Though mirrored in each pool,
Nor sin nor sorrow finds surcease
 In calm that comes by rule.

Distant the heights, and hard to climb ;
 But there the wise man seeks
The peace to be : somewhere, sometime,
 It rests beyond the peaks.

Keen is the air upon the hills,
 And stones abound, not bread ;
Yet stones do tell, when dry the rills,
 Of one by ravens fed.

MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

"AGAIN the buds, the small green leaves :

I love the spring," she said—

"Its promise of the summer sheaves,

Its signs that winter's fled."

"And yet when trees are black and
bare,"

One, list'ning, made reply,

"Not sign, but certainty is there,

Despite a frowning sky."

"Happy to live with buds in sight,

But happier to know,

Though black is covered close with
white,

The green is there below."

“WHERE EVERY PROSPECT
PLEASES ”

NOT a flicker of grey nor of white,
No cloud in the wide arch of blue,
Just one glory of colour and light,
And yet—discontent with the view !

Is it lack of grey clouds that we feel ?
Do we crave for shadows we miss ?
Is there need to touch the ideal
Of tears in a voice, or a kiss ?

Or perchance, hath this failure to please
A cause more prosaic, less plain ?
Is it thought of potatoes and peas
That sets us off sighing for rain ?

FOREST LOVERS

THE ivy clings close round the oak's rough
bark,

Big tree and small, glossy green leaves ;
One wonders, if wooing were done in the
dark,

If oak or if ivy grieves.

Do those homely leaves find the climb a
strain ?

Is the green enough for the oak ?
Does ivy dream palings adown the lane ?
Would oak be by roses awoke ?

Or are both our lovers, perchance, con-
tent ?—

She to peep through branches, at stars ;
And he, nor longing for colour nor scent,
Leaves hiding and healing his scars !

SUNSETS

THE sun shines good-night on the firs
In a rapture of golden mist,
Not a leaf, not an insect stirs,
Though the leaves and the light have kist.

The hills catch the glow, and flush red,
And the tall grey spire, and the lake—
The flush is on dumb and on dead,
And on sheep that browse, half awake.

The sun shines good-night on the tiles—
Wet tiles in a sad little street
Where grey smoke goes up between whiles,
As excuse for coals and for meat !

To give glow to hills that are green,
More beauty to solitudes blest,
Or to shine on crowds and unclean—
Which "view" does the sun-god love best?

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

NEW shadows round the hayricks creep,

New lambs are in the fold ;

Old shadows rise, a tryst to keep,

Forget that they are old !

The dear, dead years seem all aglow,

Limelight on every scene !

On all that golden "long ago "

No mist, no "might have been."

The light that never was shines there !

Love-light, by memory trimmed ;

'Tis only what we lose keeps fair,

For ever young, undimmed.

“CLEAR SHINING AFTER RAIN”

THE floods may come, and earth's glad
green

Be veil'd in dolorous grey,
And dimly mountain-tops be seen
Through clouds that darken day.

But when the ark's on Ararat,
And birds sing loud again,
And silent that sad pitipat
Of softly falling rain—

Do some, perchance, the floods regret,
And question which is best,
And if the days when they forget
Indeed are happiest ?

A SHRINE OF THE WOODS

(BROOK, SURREY)

A BARN-LIKE store set back in a field,
Dim woods and wide heaths beyond,
And goods for all, such as ghosts might
yield
If Aladdin waved his wand.

Nothing quite new, or sound, or whole,
No "set" complete, nor "a pair";
Dead rose-leaves left in a broken bowl;
A cushionless baby-chair;

Tall stand—and where once the trophy
stood
Some dust-deep fishing-rods:
A shrine for idols in ware and wood
That once were household gods!

HOPE

FIRST fade the flowers, then fall the
leaves,
And by-and-by, where once stood sheaves,
Are frozen clods of hard, cold earth—
Dead clods that once knew Spring and
birth.

And in this world of maids and men
There comes like change of now and
then,
A season brief of fruit and flowers,
A winter long of lone, dark hours.

And what is long, and what is brief,
Or sign of death on flower and leaf?
The frost-bound earth will bloom anew—
Can less than this of love be true?

SEEMING

SNOW on the hilltop and frost in the
heart,
From neither the white seal may lift nor
depart ;
But cold hill and cold heart they make
their brave show,
And gleam and look green to the edge of
the snow.

Smooth seems the hilltop to swift, careless
feet,
Warm the sad heart that wayfarers greet ;
When the sun goeth down, the hill turneth
grey,
And the heart freezes hard at close of the
day.

FROM THE BOUGHS

OH ! dumb little loud-singing birds,
I tire of your songs without words,
That rapture I feel, but not share,
That music of love in the air !

What note is it jars in the strain ?
The lack of a human refrain ?
When a passion of love is the theme,
Does it need we come into the dream ?

FROM THE TOWN

A CITY GARDEN

GOD'S acre turn'd to open space—

Flat stones and flowers, and garden seat,
A shabby, cheery resting-place

Where children play and tired folks
meet.

Those little nameless, levell'd mounds,

And they who wept or knelt beside—
How would they like these pleasure-
grounds,

The ones who wept, the ones who died?

Forgotten ! But to feel again
The joy of use ! Maybe they know,
And we, remembering, feel the pain,
And they, forgot, would have it so.

FROM A WINDOW

SOFT mist or slant rain that hides all the
lawn,
Or hills showing clear in the light of the
dawn,
Broad views that are fix'd by the sun or
the rain,
Is this world which we watch from our
window-pane.

And veil'd or reveal'd, 'tis a world of green
things,
And the creatures that haunt it have hoofs
and wings,

And songs and shy glances, but no sound
of speech—

I turn from the window—'tis all out of
reach !

Another window I know whence I look,
And for love of it leave my work or my
book,

And pull from the window its decorous
blind,

For sake of its view of my dear kin and
kind.

The blue sky here is the tiniest strip,
And on clattering stones the raindrops
drip,

Just a fog-bound view in a narrow street—
But through the glass darkly a heart doth
beat !

LORD MAYOR'S DAY

WHAT was it that the bells did say
On a far-off Lord Mayor's Day ?
One, listening, took heart again—
We seem to catch the old refrain,
“ Turn again—turn again.”

To the mills that grind so slow,
While the stream runs swift below ;
Little cogs on little wheels,
Tired of winding off the reels :
“ Turn again—turn again.”

To the dear old city's roar
Add your little much of more ;
To be help amid the din—
To see hope above the sin—
“ Turn again—turn again.”

AUTUMN LEAVES: TO A
REALIST

THE leaves are whirling as they fall

As if they were at play,

A sort of dance from tree and wall—

“It is the wind,” you say!

What wind would make them dance to
death?

Country leaves fall sodden!

They drift and drop at first chill breath,

Lie and die, untrodden.

Dear London leaves in park and street

Don't hoard their green for skies,

So dead, they dance to touch our feet,

As quick, to meet our eyes.

FROM THE BOOK

THE DESIRED HAVEN

PSALM cvii. 30

It has a sound of quiet seas,
Scarce rippled at the crest,
Of sun-fleck'd shade of cedar trees—
An ecstasy of rest.

To some it speaks of mountains,
Shut in, shut out from care,
Of rocks, whence gush forth fountains,
Of wide white light and air.

Yet oftentimes such haven
Is just a bleak, bare place,
And crowded with the craven,
Who shrink and hide their face.

And they who bid such brothers
To hope, to hear, to see,
These find the "calm" that's promised
Are brought "where they would be."

THE DAUGHTER OF AIAH

2 SAMUEL Ch. xxi.

"THEY are my memories," she cried ;
"It may be they have justly died :
Be thine the doom, be theirs the sin,
Mine is the heart they have lived in.

"Nor beast of field nor bird of air
Shall rend or scar what he held fair ;

And I will guard in death as life
The sons of him who called me wife."

She spread her sackcloth on the rock,
She let them stare, or weep, or mock,
And steadfast, silent in her pain,
Saw harvest-moon grow round, and wane.

Perchance, keen vultures on the wing
Forbore at so divine a thing,
And bird and beast to Rizpah then
Did reverence, as now do men.

"I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES
TO THE HILLS"

BUT when we know we cannot reach
To Pisgah's nearest, smallest slope,
What can those distant, dim heights teach
To eyes that strain in far-off hope?

Poor eyes ! that cannot cry nor close,
That see but absent, distant, past,
Your lesson is—not only those—
Still lift them, “ help ” will come at last

UNTO THIS LAST

JOB xvi. 2

“ TIME will help,” they come and say,
And shake your hand and go away ;
“ Time will help you to forget ”—
And so add terror to regret.

If the smile, the look, grow dim,
And we can think dry-eyed of him,
If our hurt shall be scarr'd o'er—
Shall that not be a grief the more ?

Wish us rather memories green,
A surer hold on dear “ has been,”
Eternity to love again—
Not faithless time's swift salve to pain.

WILD GRAPES

ISAIAH v. 4

THE thoughts too deep for tears,
What thoughts are they?
Count up dark months and years,
But pause at May.

Streams stayed by winter frost
Flow swift again,
Eyes that have looked and lost
Weep rainbow rain.

But what of buds in May,
That blossom white
To flowers that do not stay,
Nor fruit requite?

Dry-eyed, in divers shapes
May thoughts press sore:
My vine brings forth wild grapes—
What could I more!

"MY PEOPLE"

JEREMIAH xi. 4

HE set us free—

To bear the yoke ;

" Let them serve Me"—

'Twas thus He spoke.

He call'd us " Mine,"

Not for desire ;

To be call'd Thine

Meant sword and fire,

And anguish sharp—

In every land

The exile's harp

Forgot his hand.

Men reap'd their own :

God's acre ours !

On graves alone

Might we grow flowers.

But oh ! worth while,
Strong love divine,
Outcast or vile,
To be call'd Thine,

To feel Thy love,
Like shepherding,
Like brooding dove,
Like eagle's wing !

As mothers speak
To sons distrest,
The sore, the weak,
Thou comfortest.

Oh ! worth the cost,
And welcome pain !
World's love well lost
Thy love to gain.

We will serve Thee.

As Jacob swore,

“ This God shall be

Mine evermore.”

His oath we swear,

His blessing take ;

Thy yoke we bear,

For Thy Name's sake !

“ HE SHALL REBUKE THE
HEATHEN ”

A DEMUR : SEE *Westminster Gazette*, FEBRUARY 10,

1904

BECAUSE He slumbers not nor sleeps,

And watcheth over all,

Because He ceaseless vigil keeps,

And needs no trumpet-call—

Is that good cause that men be dumb,
Or "gladness" give for praise?
Are tears not held as toll from some?
Are there not many ways?

The guardian God of Israel
Is not the golden calf!
And lips He bade declare His praise
Are not content to laugh!

"WHERE LOVE IS"

PROVERBS xv. 17

FOR what should we be grateful, say,
The daily bread for which we pray?
And dream the manna in the leaven,
And count the loaf as food from heaven?

Or grudge the grace for common bread,
And keep our thanks for times we're fed

On milk and honey, wine and corn,
With silver spoon, like fairy-born.

Oh! foolish we, when slow to learn
The things that best our thanks may
 earn,
When slow to prize, all gifts above,
Enough of bread and herbs and love!

FROM THE TALMUD

A TALMUDIC STORY

ONE morn, so ancient records say,
 Upon the stainless Temple stones,
Under its golden dome, there lay
 A sad, sore heap of skin and bones.

Lean, dead, diseased—a mongrel cur—
 And angry priests whose robes were
 white
Pointed at sores, at eyes, at fur,
 And saw defilement in the sight.

One passed, not robed, whose hands were
clean,
Whose heart was pure, mean garb
beneath ;
He raised the dog—such sight is keen—
“Behold !” he said, “like pearls its
teeth.”

OLD STYLE

MEN call their wives by many a name
Of fancy born, or love,
And one, perchance, may record claim
Among such, or above.

“I call my wife, not wife, but home,”
An old-world Rabbi said,
His doom, by race, on earth to roam
Nor own its rest till dead.

Visions of fig tree and of vine,
Of homes his fathers knew,
Of safe, sweet joys all men call "mine,"
And dream of when they woo—

In her dear eyes he saw them all,
This shabby scholar-priest,
Who lived in shade of ghetto wall,
And lack'd a marriage-feast.

A LEGEND OF THE PROPHET ELIJAH

THE Prophet stood in the market-place,
One knowing and longing drew near :
" O seer," he cried, " look close at each
face—
Say, which earneth his heaven here ? "

The crowd was dense—it was market-day—

That eager, keen throng beside,
Such wage and such earning seem'd far
away,
But the seer saw deep and wide.

Two common men, selling common
things—

A look was the questioner's sign—
He, quick, uncaring or workmen or kings,
Ask'd, "O men, what merit is thine?"

And wondering these, "Small merit have
we,

We laugh, and we help when we can,
We patch up a peace when folks disagree,
And we're fond of our fellow-man."

*FROM FANCY AND
MEMORY*

NEW YEAR'S DAY

I KNOW not how, nor even care,
I only know somewhen, somewhere,
This heart will lose its ache and pain,
These white, wan cheeks grow red again,
These weary feet not "tire their mile,"
These cold, sad lips relearn their smile.
When nights are dark I wake and dream,
And past the gloom, I see the gleam,
See snow-white hedges, white with May,
And dead years crown'd with New Year's
Day.

LEAVES AND FLOWERS: A
FANCY

A WAY they have in an alien land,
When a maiden plights her slim white
hand,

To crown her with autumn leaves ;
And when early dies a maiden fair,
To fill her hands and to deck her hair
With gayest summer flowers,

Saying, joyous folks must look on earth,
And lowly help it to new birth,
As do the autumn leaves.

But hands that clasp'd and could not
hold,

Poor little hands, so soft, so cold,
Fill them with flowers.

TO L——

KISSES kissed may bring regret—
Men remember and forget—
But against such sort we set
The token of a quitted debt.

Kisses missed—a phantom train
Blown from hungry lips in vain—
These shall haunt us when we fain
Lip to lip would kiss again.

“We you might have kissed are wed,”
“We you should have kissed are dead”;
And the kisses we have missed
Hurt us worse than those we kissed.

HER MISTAKE

LOVE laid a heart down at her feet,
Small feet that found life's pathway sweet,
So sweet, so smooth, so full of play,
A heart seemed only in the way.

She listened to its beats awhile,
Then gently dropt it with a smile ;
She had all toys except a heart,
And hearts, she'd heard, ' could ache
and smart.

For fear of love, its cost and pain,
For love of life, her life was vain.
Poor foolish feet ! that thought to tread
The ways reserved for happy dead !

GHOSTS

WRINGING thin hands and white,
Shadows of woe,
Mistlike they walk at night,
Ghosts that we know.

Pacing, the grass between—
Restless they tread,
Parted, unheard, unseen,
Poor lonely dead !

Seeking and finding not,
Wailing their lack—
Yet is there harder lot,
Ghosts that come back !

Losing, those know no strange
Meeting again !
Harder than loss is change—
Parting, less pain.

Busy, at work and play,
Hurried or slow,
Smiling, some walk by day,
Ghosts that we know !

Seeking, these see the face,
Open the door—
Only to find their place
Knows them no more !

A RIVER IN SPAIN

[*“ One of the rivers of Spain, the Guadiana, plunges at a certain point in its course below the ground, but throws up to the surface, at one place and another, certain bubbling pools, which the natives call the ‘ eyes of the Guadiana.’ ”*]

DOES it feel its hard fate, that sad river,
Unseen of the sun, underground,
To flow without sparkle or quiver,
Unstirr'd by a song or a sound ?

And the pools that they say are its "eyes,"
Do those pools grow big with the years?
Are they troubled, or blank with surprise?
And salt to the taste, as are tears?

Guadiana! it hurts us to dwell
On thoughts of thee, cramped and in
pain;
Quick one turns from those "eyes" with
a "Well,
'Tis only a river—in Spain."

PEACE

(JUNE, 1902)

At last! And none may say too soon,
Though some, for sake of the white wings,
And counting Peace the highest boon,
Mistook how England counts such things.

She holds the Crown, upholds the Cross,
She weighs, she values men and store :
Possessing, knows the pain of loss,
Counts Peace for much, but Justice more.

LET US FORGET

(1899)

THE shore once won, who counts the
waves?

Each hand, each oar, each spar that saves,
Record in heart, enshrine in song—
But all the weary, witless wrong

Let us forget.

Father, forgive them. Thus pray'd He
Who drain'd the cup at Calvary.

The prisoner of Devil's Isle
May haply ask—erect the while—

Let us forget.

We "witnesses" to "show His praise"
Must show it forth in divers ways,
By light of fame or light of fires—
All lower aims, all low desires

Let us forget.

The France of Piquart, Labori,
And Zola—that is the France we see!
The foolish few who falsely chose
In honour's name, dishonour—those

Let us forget.

THE HERBERT HOSPITAL

(1900)

NEW lamps for old! And wires to-day,
Not flickering wicks, light up the way
Where new-named bullets maim and kill,
And old-named troops swarm up the hill.

New lamps for old ! Yet wick or ray,
For this give thanks—the shadows stay,
And heroes watch the glad white wall,
And kiss those shadows where they fall.

Just as of old they come and go
Where white beds stand in still, straight
row.

Oh, sweet grey shadow ! Where it drifts
The Shadow on the Valley lifts.

A NECKLET OF PEARLS

I TELL my beads on bended knee,
And yet I use no breviary ;
A hero's love, a hero's deeds—
These are the things I tell my beads !

I slip my pearls adown the string,
So many days, and each in spring ;

I count them up the other way,
These are the months—each fair as May !

I touch them softly, one by one,
And in the dark, or in the sun,
His pearls are every one to me
My grateful heart's glad rosary !

WASTE

OH ! music wasted in songs we sing,
When the harp of life has a missing string,
And the player plays by ear and by sight,
Contentedly sure that the tune is right.

For 'tis love that makes the world go
round—

That tune is sure and that tune is sound !
But it will not thrill to an untuned harp—
The notes fall flat, or the notes ring sharp !

UNORTHODOX

SHALL we be ever again together—

We who so long were never apart ?

What like will it be, that new Forever ?

Haply the finding a waiting heart.

What says the Vision ? “ New Earth ”
revealing—

Borders of agate, gates of red gold ;

Are we ungracious to pray, low kneeling,

“ Only renew our days as of old ” ?

WAITING

WHEN the daisies begin to grow over-
head,

And perchance we know we are newly
dead,

From the world awake, where we dumbly
sleep,

Do there come sounds we are fain to
keep?

Birds' songs, sweet and shrill, ring out on
the breeze;

Winds whisper—we stir not for echo of
these—

But oh for a footfall to stir that dull
grass!

We list for that coming, we grudge that
it pass.

And soft rustle of gown, close, close, yet
so far,

Does love catch that sound betwixt star
and star?

A sobbing from lips where we knew but a
smile?

Such echoes, may be, we wait for awhile.

BELOVED OF THE GODS

THOSE the gods love die young, 'tis said ;
And we, who love them too,
Bewail such honour done our dead,
And grudge the gods their due.

Maybe, thereby we miss the truth,
And do the gods a wrong ;
It may but mean—those keep their youth,
And, full of years, die young.

Immortal love defies the years,
Keeps hearts from growing cold,
Renews the fount of smiles and tears,
And none, so loved, die old !

AN ANNIVERSARY

WHAT signifies a day or date,
Or fount of tears run dry,
Sad eyes that have look'd full at fate
Find no set times to cry.

There's weeping where bright colours glow,
The rainbow is its sign,
But there, the while the tears do flow
It needs the sun to shine.

But where the cloud stays all the years—
A soft-lined silver-grey—
No sudden shining rain of tears
Can fall for date or day.

“FADED”

“WILL keep its colour”—thus they speak
Of silk and stuff in praise.

What is their test? Can eye and cheek
By heeding learn their ways?

Can we be careful with our blue
And hoarding with our rose?
Determine that the tears be few,
Dry each one as it flows?

Perchance, could we the colours keep,
Our stuff, it would wear thin!
So let them fade, and let us weep
For sorrow and for sin.

ECHOES

INSISTENT echoes haunt the ear

From that small word "Goodbye"—
Elusive, far, familiar, near,
They come, one soundless sigh.

The sad goodbyes so fondly said
From soon-made, soon-lost friends ;
The glad goodbyes from newly wed,
That spell "begins," not "ends."

And some farewells we strain to keep,
Though every tone is pain,
Echoes whereat we weep and weep,
And ache to hear again.

LOVE'S FATE

LOVE in her eyes lay sleeping,
Death woke it with a touch :
Her eyes, they fell a-weeping,
Death kissed them overmuch.

Love in her eyes is waking,
Life closed the lids with lead :
Death kept her heart from breaking,
And her love from lying dead.

TIME AND TEARS

So many chains about the feet,
And heart and hands and head,
So many ways, some wise, some sweet,
To wean us from our dead.

The light may claim its shadows deep,
Children of Light may pine,
And when light fails, or children weep,
'Tis "discontent divine" !

There was a way for common folk
Once in the far-off years :
When Israel own'd the Roman yoke
There was a toll for tears ; *

They might pay more, and longer weep
Close to their wailing wall—
A gentler rule now makes us keep
To time for tears to fall.

* St. Jerome records that while the sad Jewish crowd wept amid the ruins of their Temple, a Roman official would draw near and exact the tax which conferred on them the right of burying their tears.

AN IDLE QUESTION

IN love, if choice were ours,
Which would we choose ?
To have our golden hours,
And then to lose ?

To live the song we sing,
Thrill to each strain,
Then wear the rose and ring
For rue, and chain ?

Or live long, leaden days,
Grey, safe, and good—
Wind-sheltered, well-kept ways—
Which ? an' we could !

THE ROSE OF JOY

How shall we use it—our Rose of Joy?
Pluck it and wear it—a one-day toy?
Or plant it in pot, in hope it grows
Like common roses—that one rare rose?

Wouldst keep its sweet scent on hands, on
 hair,
Always and ever and everywhere?
There's only one way—the way one
 grieves—
To crush it to death and keep the leaves!

STRONG AS DEATH

LOVE made him a nest in a small mean cage
 In a cage too small for his wings;
But there he lived from his youth to his age,
 And in want always of all things.

FROM FANCY AND MEMORY 75

Chill winds and cold rains, they beat on
the nest ;

But the floods, we know, cannot drown :
Not a plume was damp'd on wing or on
breast—

The chill that kills love is a frown !

“Oh ! this love, it must die,” the gossips
said—

“Tis living a starved, charm'd life” ;
But with ease and with hope and glamour
dead,

Love lived—in the heart of a wife !

WE TWO

WET trees were shivering in the blast,
White wings were skimming low and fast,
The wind moaned loud upon us kneeling,
It tried to drown the joy bells pealing,

We two were one !

The skies were shining, gleaming,
One wide blue arch in seeming,
The birds, full choir, uprose in song,
To muffled bells moved on the throng,
We two were one !

And whether clouds shut out the blue,
Or clear, chill sunshine flood the view,
Whether the peal of marriage-bell
Float on the air, or funeral knell—
We two are one !

QUATRAIN

(IN REPLY TO TRIOLET, *Westminster Gazette*,
MAY, 1899)

“ ALL is vanity ! ” Glibly we quote.
Horrid phrase ! one knows it by rote—
All is vanity ! “ And he—was—wise.”
Yes ; but he look’d into many eyes.

FROM FANCY AND MEMORY 77

Perhaps, if he'd look'd into only two,
And they'd been honest and nice and
 blue,
Perhaps, he who built the House and the
 Wall
Had seen more good, more use in it all.

WHITE JASMINE

ITS scent on her hands, its stars in her hair,
And oh ! was there ever a night so fair,
Ever such flowers, such stars, such sea,
The night that I knew my love loved me ?

Its scent on the breeze, and crape on her
 hair,
And the hair is grey and our coffers spare ;
Yet through the years the perfume lingers,
So close the clasp of those little fingers.

THE COST OF IT

SUN all day and drought to-morrow,
Love a year and life to sorrow,
Shadows where once shone the ray,
Shadows lengthening with the day.

To feel the thrill and bear the ache,
To dream the kiss and weep to wake,
To scale the height and reach it—old !
To make one's pile and find it—gold !

We play the game, we throw the dice,
We win the toss or pay the price,
And then, at close of day, we sit
And reckon up the cost of it.

The light that never was—her smile—
The children—ah ! it was worth while.
Of all we win, of all we've lost,
It's only Love that's worth its cost

BLIND

SURELY, swiftly, the light grew dim,
Day and night were alike to him,
And friends spoke low—"Worse blind than
dead";
But he, he smiled—"I see," he said.

"She, the light of my eyes, is left.
Sad eyes of other light bereft,
Reflecting that, can pierce the gloom,
Be darkly bright, despite their doom."

LOVE, A CROWN?

"LOVE, a crown?" she one day asked,
With Love's burden overtasked;
Her tired heart it made mistake,
"Love," it answer'd—"Love is ache."

Slumbering faith was wakened so,
Wet blue eyes, they flashed out, "No"—
Thin, worn fingers, aching feet,
All protested, "Pain is sweet."

"Eat the honey, blame the bee,
That's ungrateful heresy!
Store the honey, hide the sting,
That's the cult of wedding ring!

"They who know hold this, for sure
Love may hurt, but lone hurts more!
Work you, weep you, for love's sake :
Not to love would be the ache!"

IN HOPE

"NOT for the halo," she said, "if it's there,
And not for the crown, or the wings,
Nor pavement of pearl, nor harp in the air,
My soul cannot strive for these things.

"Not for the gaining," she said, "of such
gifts

Is the soul of a woman stirred—
Can they not tell us the veil, when it
lifts,
Will show that our dead, too, have
heard?

"For 'eye hath not seen,'" she said, "for
the tears,

And 'ear hath not heard' for the sound
Of echoing words adown the dull years,
Lost love-words all gone under ground."

RUE

"RUE for remembrance," sighing, she said ;
"But what may avail to forget ?
Close clings the scent when roses are dead,
Nor fragrance grows faint with regret.

"Roses or rue!—it availeth me naught,
And floods, it is writ, cannot drown;
Yet rather would I the floods than the
drought :
I take up my cross with my crown."

A MODERN MAID

"I LOVE you not," she said, and
smiled—

"I love not love indeed;
And kiss of husband or of child
Is not to me a need.

"My life is mine; my own to live
With busy brain and hands :
I will not share, I will not give;
The sea for me—not sands!"

“ I love you now,” she said, and wept,
When years had come and gone ;
But he on sands had slipt and slept,
Whilst she sailed seas forlorn.

“ ICH HABE GELEBT UND
GELIEBT ”

ADOWN the years the shadows flit,
Shadows of men and things :
Some still—“ Here I and sorrow sit ”—
Some with a stir of wings.

Pale joys we lived ungrudgingly,
Dim griefs we faced and wept,
And frustrate ghosts who wearily
Seek hours we miss'd, or slept.

And glad or grave, or dull or gay,
These shadows form the past,
Those least have power to darken day
Whom, holding, we held fast !

HIS ANSWER

“WHY I love you?” Hard the task,
Because to find to such a why—
Will it answer what you ask,
That you are you, and I am I ?
If I tell of eyes and hair,
Make list of charms, still incomplete,
Time will come, mark each less fair,
Eyes and lips, sweet hands and feet.
But love takes little heed of time,
And so, you see, there is no why—
But reason, and some sort of rhyme,
In you are you, and I am I !

Dear ! be content to leave it so !

Leave pedants their insistent why,
And count it wisdom just to know
That you are you, and I am I !

VISIONS

To follow the gleam, to see and to follow
The light that was never on sea or on
land,
By field or by fen, on height or in hollow,
The glint of a star—a beckoning hand.

Where vision is not, men perish, 'tis said ;
Yet say, shall we pray to see, or be
blind ?

For some of us pray for the peace of the
dead ;

When visions reveal, 'tis mirage we find.

“AS A DREAM WHEN ONE
AWAKETH”

WE sing of it, sigh for it,

City of dreams !

Would live in it, up to it,

Bask in its beams !

We picture it, portion it,

City so fair !

We know it, each stone of it,

City in air !

Yet doubt of it, nearing it,

This, is it this ?

For sign of it, sound of it

Fades in a kiss !

The hills of it, towers of it

Level are grown !

The dreams of it lost in it,

Home of our own !

LIGHTS

THERE came a whisper long ago,
A "Think you, dear, it might be so?"
It never was; yet oft it seems
That that was real and this were
dreams.

And where live men and women meet
The dreams that last are passing sweet;
Fair human loves—enough of gold!—
A growing knack at growing old.

But no such growth with "might have
been!"

Again the miracle is seen—
The sun stands still—and ever young
Keep voices that have never sung.

The lovely light of changeless day
Upon such rests. Maybe the grey
And fitful gleam of hearth-lit fires
The better warm our best desires.

ILLEGITIMATE

NO stone, she said, shows slant and
grey,
With brief *hic jacet* ! such a day ;
No little mound shuts out the sky ;
We have no rights, my tears and I.

No right to kindly toll of tears ;
No blind-drawn day—just all the years !
For life, not death, came in between
And made the story, “ might have been.”

HE AND SHE

" I FEAR," she said, " to love and lose,
To have, and then to miss ;
Pale lips unprest, were mine to choose,
Than feel a shadow-kiss.

" I fear," she said, " for at a breath
The threefold cord doth strain,
And sure and hid lurks cruel Death
To cut the cord in twain."

" Yet love," he said, " and fearlessly !
Who love, triumphant sing,
O Grave ! where is thy victory ?
O Death ! where is thy sting ? "

THE DAYS OF OUR YOUTH

THE days of our youth, which are they?
The sunny, long summer day,
Fill'd full with laughter and light,
And sleep without dreams in the night?

Those days when a sharp, sudden shower
Comes drowning the fruit and the flower,
And fears of the stormcloud again
Make rainbows a promise of pain?

At evening time it is light,
And stars, they shine clear in the night—
Sometimes, as we turn back the page,
The days of our youth come in age.

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